

City of Bridgeport  
**Mayor Joseph P. Ganim**



**Transition Task Force Report**

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## **Transition Task Force Report**

The Honorable Joseph P. Ganim  
Mayor  
City of Bridgeport  
999 Broad Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

February 10, 2016

Dear Mayor Ganim,

The members of the Transition Task Force are very pleased to issue this Transition Report for full consideration by the Ganim Administration and the City of Bridgeport. As members of your Transition Task Force, we have been able to research the scope, function, and impact of municipal services to the citizens of Bridgeport and to evaluate the myriad of public issues facing our residents, businesses, institutions, covering all sectors of the city. We hope that this Transition Report will generate discussion, foster new ideas, and help to improve the Park City we all love. Bridgeport faces daunting challenges as the largest urban center in the state, a structurally stressed tax base, municipal and school budget underfunding, and diverse interests which often conflict.

We believe the City can tap into the knowledge and energy found from so many citizens willing to help Bridgeport, such as the dedicated members of this Task Force. We know that you have vowed to govern in an accountable and open manner to foster a better government to represent the best interests of citizens. We believe that your leadership will take us on a journey which will produce solid accomplishments and major progress for Bridgeport. We applaud your efforts to expand civic engagement and to more equitably distribute municipal resources to underserved neighborhoods. We are gratified by the immediate steps you have already taken to appoint better professionals, to bring unprecedented diversity to City Hall, and to open the Mayor's office to greater participation and idealism.

The members of this Transition Task Force have given hundreds, if not thousands, of hours holding public meetings, attending working sessions, interviewing departmental and civic leaders, reviewing reports, and debating ways to address the issues and challenges our City faces. The Transition Task Force, through its six various sub-committees, reflect the broad diversity of our City. We thank all the members of the Transition Task Force, the Committee Chairs, and transition volunteer coordinator Kenneth Flatto, as well as various former campaign volunteers who assisted with administering these efforts.

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This Report offers many recommendations and assessments of city issues in a relatively short period. The Report is divided into six sections to reflect the efforts of each Transition Committee.

We fully understand the financial realities and challenges you have inherited. We feel the City was poorly mismanaged in many areas which opens the door to significant opportunities to do better for the people of Bridgeport. We know that you have the vision and leadership skills to lead us and we stand ready to serve you further at any time.

Most sincerely,

Alma Maya  
Co-Chair  
Former Bridgeport Town Clerk

Neil Salonen  
Co-Chair  
President, University of Bridgeport

Charles Stallworth  
Co-Chair  
State Representative

## **Executive Summary**

### **Overview**

This Executive Summary reflects and summarizes key issues, findings, and recommendations contained in each of the six Transition Committee reports which make up the body of this document. This Executive Summary is designed to give readers a solid overview of the issues and recommendations for accomplishment sought by the Transition Task Force.

The Transition Task Force believes that there are significant opportunities to improve and strengthen the community fabric of the City of Bridgeport as well as improve and strengthen the function of government in the City of Bridgeport.

Given the critical scope of this mission, the Transition Task Force Committees focused on all areas where there could be immediate or long term improvements to services provided to the public, as well as to identify possible cost savings and/or funding needs for the City.

### **Background**

This process involved many meetings by each of the six Transition Committees over a three-month period since late November 2015. Committee work included broad discussions and interviews with civic leaders within the community, members and staff of city government and school district, citizens, businesses, and institutions within the city.

Two major public forums were held with hundreds of citizens attending, offering comment, advice and expressing concerns about problems. The dedication of members and the hope to offer the administration with ideas and a road map through this report is self-evident. The committees looked at best practices, comparable cities programs, national municipal trends, and reports researched by the committees.

### **Mission**

The Transition Task Force feels that the process for seeking improvements to quality of life and the effort to make governmental functions more efficient and accountable should be visible and ongoing. The mission of the Task Force is to help enable the Mayor and his Administration to pursue positive initiatives for change for the betterment of Bridgeport for everyone in Bridgeport.

The team would like to sincerely thank all the citizens, activists, and city employees who took the time to participate in this process. This effort would not have been possible without their input and cooperation. If deemed appropriate, many members are interested to assist and serve in a volunteer capacity to help in an ongoing manner for the benefit of Bridgeport. Some Committees plan to continue holding meetings to offer the Mayor ongoing input and thought.

We are excited to present this Report to the Mayor and pleased to know the Transition Task Force and its ideas are an important part of the first 100 days of the Ganim Administration. We thank the Mayor for his confidence in us and for the opportunity to offer comment, ideas, and recommendations. We hope that publication of the Ganim Transition Task Force Report will benefit the citizens of Bridgeport and foster dialogue and innovative approaches to solving Bridgeport's problems and issues.

## **INDEX OF COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Open Government, Accountability, and Transparency	Page 7
Government Operations and Financial Policies	Page 17
Economic Development and Small Business	Page 31
Community and Neighborhood Services	Page 42
Public Safety and Emergency Services	Page 57
Education and Youth	Page 61

# Open Government, Accountability, and Transparency

## Members:

**Nick Khamarji, Jr.**, Co-Chair, New England Insurance  
**Edward Adams**, Co-Chair, Retired FBI Special Agent  
**Ray Ganim, Esq.**, Ganim Law, P.C.  
**Charlie Coviello**, Community Activist/former Mayoral Candidate  
**Michelle Lyons**, City Councilmember, 134<sup>th</sup> District  
**Eneida Martinez**, City Councilmember 139<sup>th</sup> District  
**Tom Mulligan, Esq.**, McNamara & Kenny  
**Lisa Parziale**, former City Council President  
**Bishop Courtney Williams**, Refuge Temple Church  
**Alma Maya**, Ex-Officio



## Mission and Overview

This Task Force Committee has been assigned to review and summarize city government ethics policies, Freedom of Information policies, procedures, and best practices, and other open government practices currently utilized by the City of Bridgeport.

In the ensuing pages, we have summarized the current applicable standards and sought to give a comprehensive status of the current State of the City within the scope of our mission.

We have also included our recommended improvements to ensure open government, accountability, and transparency within all departments in the City of Bridgeport.

## Areas of Focus

The Open Government, Accountability, and Transparency Task Force Committee has focused on the following areas:

1. [Freedom of Information](#)
2. [Boards and Commissions](#)
3. [Ethics Ordinance and Policies](#)
4. [Open Forums for Constituent Involvement](#)
5. [Contracts and Purchasing](#)
6. [Budget Analysis](#)
7. [Constituent Services and City Responsiveness](#)

# Freedom of Information

## Findings

Currently, Freedom of Information is handled through the City Attorney's office. Reports from Task Force members and constituents have found that the process of obtaining public, nonexempt information from the City of Bridgeport to be extremely difficult and, at times, impossible.

This Task Force reviewed the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act as codified in Chapter 14 of the Connecticut General Statutes including the 2015 amendments. Some highlights as summarized by this Task Force include:

- a. Most records or files of state and local agencies, including minutes of all their meetings, are available to the public for inspection or copying including, but not limited to, information or data which is typed, handwritten, tape recorded, printed, photographed, or computer-stored and most inter-agency and intra-agency memoranda or letters.
- b. There is a comprehensive list of exempt records recorded in CGS § 1-210.
- c. Requests for information do not necessarily need to be completed in writing. This is especially true in an open and transparent environment.
- d. When Freedom of Information requests are denied, they may be appealed to the State of Connecticut.

## Recommendations

1. **Require annual, mandatory training of all department heads including the Mayor and Chief of Staff by the State of Connecticut Office of Governmental Accountability Freedom of Information Commission. [Click Here to view The Connecticut Freedom of Information Act as codified in Chapter 14 of CGS § 1-200 including 2012 Amendments.](#)**
  - a. <http://tinyurl.com/gn9yv6v> (URL)
2. **Make the aforementioned training available to city council members, Board of Education officials, ethics commission members, and others who would benefit from such training.**
3. **Research the new ordinances and policies for implementation in the City of Bridgeport enacted by the [New York City Open Data Legislation](#).**
  - a. <http://tinyurl.com/nbzhzyd> (URL)
4. **Move the Freedom of Information request processing to the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability, if so formed, and out of the City Attorney's office except in cases noted in the below Tier III – Referral.**

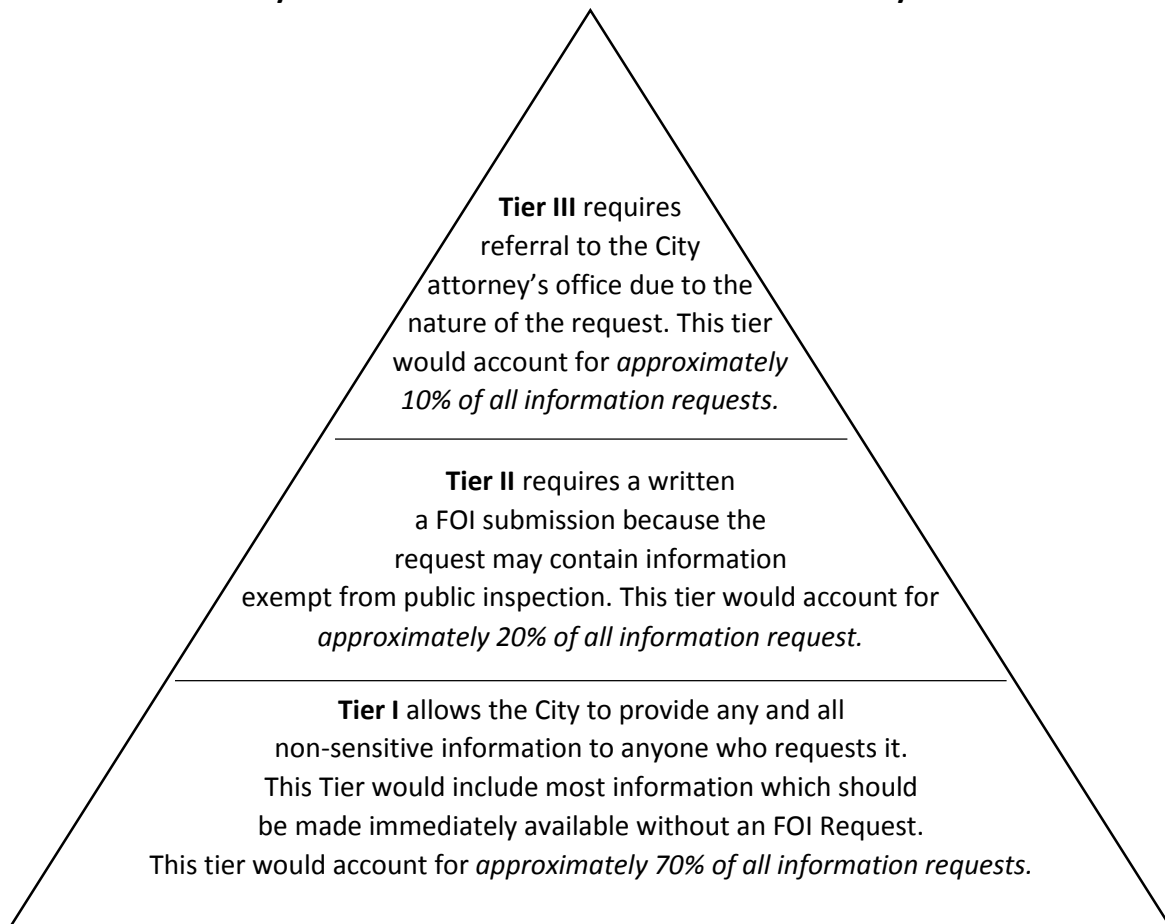


**5. Post the following statement as suggested by this committee:**

*Your Rights Under the Freedom of Information Act*

You may freely request information from this governmental department. We will make every effort to provide information upon your request. At times, we will need to refer your request due to the sensitivity of data you are asking us to provide. Should your request be denied, you may submit a written request for information under the Freedom of Information Act to this department or the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability for further review.

**6. Enact a Tiered System of Best Practices for Information Delivery as follows:**



## Boards and Commissions

### Findings

Through this Task Force's investigation, most, if not all, boards and commissions have seats which are either vacant or have expired terms. This indicates that these board and commission members are operating on expired terms if they are even still active on their respective board or commission.

The status quo from prior administrations appear to have neglected to take a proactive approach in recommending new or renewal members to boards and commissions. This may be an indication that these boards and commissions are not operating productively or efficiently due to a lack of participation from citizens.

This Task Force reviewed the City Charter, Municipal Code, City Website, and City Clerk's records for information regarding current or most recent members of each board and commission.

### Recommendations

- 1. Update Boards and Commissions and fill all vacancies and expired terms.**
- 2. Issue a press release to search for qualified candidates to fill board and commission seats and place such information on City web site.**
- 3. Review resumes of interested persons.**
- 4. Submit recommendations to City Council for approval.**
- 5. Reassess the scope of each board and commission and update as deemed necessary.**

A comprehensive review of Chapter 2 of the Bridgeport Municipal Code will give guidance as to the terms of each committee, meeting requirements, scope, and powers of each board or commission. This committee has sought to lay out each board or commission name hereunto along with whom we have found, on information and belief, currently serves on said board and commission. This list should be verified with whatever resources the City has available.

# Ethics Ordinance & Policies

## Findings

This Task Force has reviewed many City processes, ordinances, and best practices regarding Ethics. While this Task Force has not been formed to recommend changes, you will see in the recommendations below that this Task Force recommends that there be a comprehensive review of all ethics policies, procedures, and best practices.

Mayor Joseph P. Ganim's Mayoral Campaign was largely based on his commitment to bring solid ethics back into the City of Bridgeport's operations as the City has been plagued with significant conflicts of interest, corruption, and overall unethical behavior.

It is this Task Force's position that the City of Bridgeport would benefit greatly from a full recommitment to ethical practices within city government which will help re-establish the City's image.

## Recommendations

- 1. Review Chapter 2.38, Code of Ethics, of the Bridgeport Municipal Code for potential updates to the current verbiage.**
- 2. Bring the Ethics Commission membership to full capacity with current terms.**
- 3. Establish an Office of Public Integrity and Accountability. This Task Force has proposed text for an ordinance which begins on the following page.**
- 4. Begin researching best practices for becoming an "Open City." This would include policies regarding Open Data such as those accepted into practice by New York City.**  
[Click Here to View the NYC Open Data Plan.](#)

## **Open Forums for Constituent Involvement**

### **Findings**

This Task Force began the same night in which the first Constituent Forums were held. Having gained feedback from constituents both positive and negative, this Task Force is recommending these open forums for constituent involvement continue on a regular basis and be spearheaded by City Council Members.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Recommend that City Council hold five Open Forums staggered throughout the year, each combining two City Council Districts.**
- 2. Recommend that City Council Members host and facilitate their Open Forum at a public location such as a library, church, or meeting space in their district.**
- 3. Recommend that City Council use these meetings for bi-directional communication both as updates from City Council to constituents and feedback from constituents to their City Council Member.**
- 4. Recommend that City Council send out a postcard reminder mailer of the meeting in their district to each household dividing the cost equally amongst the Four City Council Members.**

## **Contracts and Purchasing**

### **Findings**

This Task Force took a birds-eye view of Contracts and Purchasing and found that there were general issues with the contracts and purchasing processes. These processes should be reviewed for accountability and revised, if necessary.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Review minority contracting for consistency and fairness.**
- 2. Review the open bidding and the online automation of bidding processes.**
- 3. Review the purchasing process for potential consolidated or bulk ordering potentials.**  
**For example, currently, we have information that all departments maintain their own accounts with whichever company they wish to order office supplies from. These can be consolidated to one company for potential savings for the City.**

# Open Budget Analysis

## Findings

This Task Force is very interested in opening up the government transparency regarding the budget.

## Recommendations

1. **Conduct a complete and manual assessment of all city finances and issue a short but concise report as a launching pad for changes.**
2. **Consider having an outside accounting council formed to oversee the formation of this report. Keep the report 2 pages or less as a Financial State of the City.**
3. **Review debt and pensions statutes.**
4. **Account all tax breaks, abatements, and other deals and make public information.**

## Constituent Services and City Responsiveness

### Findings

This Task Force has found that the City of Bridgeport's administration of Constituent Services and City Responsiveness appears to have significant room for improvement especially compared to other cities in this state.

### Recommendations

1. **Replace the bConnected application as it is not optimally functional nor is it a best-in-class operation. Rework or replace the Qalert system. We would recommend a company such as SeeClickFix or similar to replace both of these. Ensure input from departments affected.**
2. **Set new and achievable expectations for City Responsiveness to constituent services. Rework what seems to be a broken backend process by which the city responds to constituent requests.**
3. **Replace parking meters downtown to accommodate many forms of payment.**

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# Government Operations and Financial Policies

## Members:

**Valerie Sorrentino**, Co-Chair, Former Business Mgr. LIUNA Local 200

**John Gomes**, Co-Chair, Small Business Owner and Current CAO

**Shante Hanks**, Deputy District Manager to Congressman Jim Himes

**Joseph Carbone**, President and CEO, Workplace Inc.

**Charlie Carroll**, Bridgeport Parks Director

**Juan Hernandez**, Business Owner, New England Investment LLC

**Tim Hodges**, VP Government Relations, Peoples Bank

**Glenn Marshall**, Pres. Carpenters Local 210 and Former State Labor Commissioner

**Grisel Seda**, Community Activist

**Alma Maya**, Ex-Officio



## Mission and Overview

This Task Force Committee has been assigned to review and summarize activities, management, human resources practices, organizational structure and resource allocations and recommend efficiencies, process improvements, cost savings and restructuring possibilities.

The team focused on areas where there could be an immediate cost savings and/or direct improvement to services provided to the public. The process included interviews with Department Heads and staff as well as internal and external customers. The team reviewed each department's budget, goals and accomplishments.

Given the time constraints, only a few key areas were touched upon. The Team feels strongly that the process of determining areas for improvement should be a well-defined and ongoing effort and, if deemed appropriate, some members have agreed to assist in a volunteer capacity. The Team also recommends that a more inclusive approach be considered to complement its efforts such as TQM (Total Quality Management) which is described in Exhibit A.

The ensuing pages summarize the areas of focus, findings and recommendations for each of the departments reviewed. The Team also noted some more general recommendations that were discussed during the meetings. The team would like to sincerely thank all the City employees who took the time to gather information and participate in this process.

## Areas of Focus

The Government Operations and Financial Policies Committee focused on the following areas:

1. Building Department
2. Health and Social Services
3. Office of Labor Relations
4. Tax Collector's Office

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## **Building Department**

### **Overview**

The Building Department issues permits and inspects work done to all buildings and other structures. Permits include building, electrical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, fire protection sprinklers and extinguishing systems, refrigeration, demolition and signs. The department should be modernized and fully supported so that it can operate at peak efficiency.

Informal interviews with union officials from the Building Trades and local contractors revealed that the lengthy and cumbersome process of getting a permit discourages people from doing work in Bridgeport. Several years ago, upon the recommendation of a TQM Team, the departments involved in the permitting process were co-located to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of City Hall to make it more convenient for people to navigate the process of obtaining a building permit. Those departments included: Building, Zoning, Engineering and Fire Marshall. Even after that measure was taken, there were still some challenges with obtaining a timely permit. This hurts development and results in lost revenues.

Team members met with staff of the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED), Building and Zoning Departments as well as a local contractor.

### **Findings**

#### ***Process to Obtain Building Permit***

The 1<sup>st</sup> step in the process is to file a permit application in the Building Department. The permit application explains the details of the project and includes drawings or sketches. Before the application is accepted, the applicant must be current in both City and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) taxes.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> step is the Zoning Department to make sure that the project is in compliance with all zoning regulations.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> step is the Engineering Department to make sure that plans are complete, include all necessary curb cuts, meet storm water regulations, etc.

The 4<sup>th</sup> step is the Fire Marshall to ensure that the project meets all fire codes.

Once all departments sign off indicating that the project is in compliance with all requirements, the application is returned to the Building Department where a permit should be issued within 30 days.

Bridgeport's Building Department had the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest number of permits in the state last year. Yet its staffing is smaller than other comparable towns. Bridgeport currently has 6 full time inspectors (2 vacancies) and 1 plan reviewer (1 vacancy). New Haven's Building Department

has 9 full time inspectors and one plan reviewer. Waterbury's Department of Inspections has 7 inspectors.

Staff shortages cause delays (and money) for contractors. There is currently only one full-time building inspector and one Plan Reviewer (a 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan reviewer was promoted to Deputy Director). Job interviews were conducted for an inspector and there is one person ready to be hired. OPED is waiting for authorization to fill the position.

The Director of Land Use and Construction retired two years ago and the position was never filled. The former Director convened design review meetings at the beginning of the process to review each project. This round table meeting helped with the planning process. In his absence of a formal process, the Director of Zoning, and his staff convene this round table whenever requested.

Clerical/Administrative Assistant staff, already insufficient, was recently reduced even more when the Administrative Specialist was transferred to the Anti-Blight Department in early November 2015 leaving the Building Department with one employee responsible for handling all permitting, inquiries, filings, receipts and supply ordering.

The Fire Marshall's Office is down two people. The office is in the process of filling the vacancies; however, training takes more than a year.

There is no access to the tax database to show that taxes are paid. Even if there was such a system, City Ordinance states that the Tax Collectors Office must sign off on the application. This is done through email but can add to the delay, especially during the busy tax months when the Tax Collector's staff may not respond timely to the emails. The same holds true for WPCA. The Building Department sends about 15 to 20 emails per day which require a check-off (current, not current or exempt) and return email from the Tax Collectors Office and WPCA.

The Building Department's website is very informative and contains a check list for the permit process along with sample applications.

The inspectors are good at what they do and staff has worked together and taken on additional duties as needed to get the job done.

Digitization is almost non-existent. Departments use paper records and the Building Permits are still typed on a typewriter. Right now the permit application must be obtained personally (i.e., no online option) at the Building Department and picked up by the applicant and physically passed from department to department. Electronic permitting would speed up the process but the cost could be a factor.

The City recognized the problem several years ago and has invested a significant amount of money with no return:

Several years ago, the City purchased Cityview Software and several tablets at a cost of \$500,000 in an attempt to modernize the process. There was a final cost of \$75,000 to bring the system online. The City did not want to pay the additional expense and instead assigned the project to Citistat which tried to connect the system through Munis. This never happened and the system and tablets were never used.

A consultant was hired last year to do an analysis of the permit process and to make recommendations on how to streamline the process including technology. The cost for the first year was \$7,500 and the cost to complete the project finish is \$60,000 with the Bridgeport Regional Business Council paying 50%.

### Impact

Potential loss of revenue - the Building Department is projected to bring in close to \$5million in revenue this fiscal year. (Actual FY 2013 = \$2.4million; Actual 2014 = \$3.7million)

A more efficient office could potentially increase the tax base in the long run.

A contractor may take a chance and do a project in Bridgeport, but if (s)he wastes time and money waiting for inspectors and a permit, (s)he may not return.

Inadequate service to Bridgeport taxpayers - if there is a pile of permit applications, larger projects may be handled first and smaller projects, like home improvements, may wait.

Immediate problem as many projects will begin in the spring.

### Recommendations

- 1. Ask the Tax Collectors Office and WPCA to develop a plan to ensure emails are reviewed and managed in a timely fashion so that the Building Department requests are not unnecessarily delayed.**
- 2. Fill at least one vacant inspector or plan reviewer position in the Building Department. Both these positions are included in the current budget.**
- 3. Fill the Administrative Specialist position in Building Department.**
- 4. Convene the design review round table meetings on a regular basis by either filling the Land Use and Construction position or by permanently assigning the responsibility to another staff member (e.g., the Director of Zoning).**
- 5. Consider purchasing electronic software for permit tracking and processing. There are many types of electronic software for permit tracking and processing used by other towns. The Chief Building Official and others involved in the process are confident they can identify appropriate software without having to pay a consultant. The cost could possibly be covered through the various vacant positions in OPED.**

## Health and Social Services

### Overview

The Department of Health and Social Services promotes and protects the health of the people of Bridgeport through the provision of essential health services, monitoring of programs, enforcement of laws and ordinances, and collection of health information. They provide oversight, communication, education, training and collaboration between all Health & Social Service departments, divisions and programs.

HSS was the focus of this Team based on the potential costs reductions and enhancement of services to the public. Prior to conducting its own research, the Team was made aware of several potential issues at 752 East Main Street concerning staffing, unfunded positions, lost grant funding and problems with the building itself. As a result, the Team focused on the HSS programs located at this location, including: Communicable Disease, Veterans Affairs, Office for Persons with Disabilities, Social Services and the East Side Senior Center which is under the Social Services umbrella.

Team members met the Director of Health and Social Services and spoke to several employees from HSS, Office of Policy and Management and Central Grants Office. Representatives from the Mayor's Office also assisted in gathering data and conducting spot checks of programs.

### Facility

There are approximately 16 HSS staff and 4 non-City programs housed at 752 East Main. The building is in horrible condition and not safe or healthy for staff or clients. The cost of utilities according to Public Facilities is more than \$98,000 annually.

The four non-City programs include: Dispensary of Hope (St. Vincent's pharmacy), Cooking Matters, Sickle Cell, State and Federal Veterans. They provide a service to Bridgeport residents but pay nothing in rent, utilities, security or parking.

The East Side Senior Center, located at the corner of East Main and Arctic Streets is leasing space for \$40,000 per year. The space is not feasible for multiple senior programs and the building is in need of repair.

An Economic Development Associate from OPED has been looking to re-locate the programs housed at 752 East Main Street for several years; however, a suitable location has not been found.

There is a pending 2015 proposal which was submitted to the State to build a mixed use development project at the site of 752 East Main Street. The project would be comprised of 275 mixed-income residential units, 18,000 sf for a health center clinic, 9,000 sf of office space for the Health Department, 9,000 sf of retail space and outdoor space for a seasonal farmer's

market. Pending the receipt of funding, the project's anticipated completion date is August 31, 2018.

### Staffing/Programs

At the time of this report, some staff members were working with no or partial funding. Some staff had been paid through an unfunded account created under the previous administration by OPM which caused department related over-runs in excess of \$150,000.

The facility utilizes a sign-in sheet to document clients who enter the facility. Program reports indicate a large number of people being served by the programs, but the sign-in sheets indicate either very minimal traffic or that people are not signing in.

The Director of HSS has recommended several mergers within the department including the merger of Veterans and Disabilities.

The State Department of Public Health has encouraged local health departments to bill for services and has recently provided technical assistance. This opportunity, which was not an option previously, could potentially increase revenues for the City.

### Recommendations

- 1. As soon as feasibly possible, close the building at 752 East Main Street and work with OPED to re-locate the programs to a more suitable space, taking into consideration accessibility issues. Review the feasibility of co-locating the East Side Senior Center with HSS. This will create a more efficient department as well as additional cost savings.**
- 2. Follow-up on the status of the pending mixed-use proposal.**
- 3. Determine whether or not to house outside programs and whether it's feasible to charge rent.**
- 4. General recommendation: Take an inventory of all City properties that are occupied by City staff or other non- City programs. Determine if non-City programs are paying rent and/or utilities, the cost to the City and the benefit to have the programs remain.**
- 5. Look into insurance billing for all applicable departments such as Lead and Communicable Disease to increase revenues.**
- 6. Review all job descriptions and qualifications to ensure that current staff have the skill set to perform their assigned jobs and that each job is justified. This is timely since grant funds have diminished during the past few years.**
- 7. Immediately transfer or terminate staff positions that are not adequately funded.**
- 8. General recommendation: Revise General Fund budget to include all grant monies. This will give a more accurate accounting of all funding to a specific department.**
- 9. Look at the number of clients served by all programs and continue ongoing monitoring to ensure efficiency and accurate reporting.**

- 10. Clarify services provided by outside Veterans groups and how City services are coordinated with them. Look at possible merger of Veterans and Persons with Disabilities with the addition of a qualified Case Manager who can work with both. The team highly recommends that the Case Manager have experience working with veterans.**
- 11. Aggressively pursue grant money to support and enhance programs.**
- 12. Increase public-private partnerships with non-profit agencies and local universities to expand the City's pool of resources.**
- 13. Continue working to become a fully accredited Health Department.**

# Labor Relations Office

## Overview

The Labor Relations Department negotiates and administers the collective bargaining agreements between the City of Bridgeport and all Unions and Associations. They also resolve grievances and labor relations disputes, handle arbitrations, State Labor Relations Board (SLRB) hearings and related or similar proceedings.

Labor Relations was selected for review by this transition team because of the potential cost savings by reducing the number of grievances, lawsuits and complaints filed against the City and decreasing the amount of money spent on outside counsel. There is also the potential to increase efficiency, improve employee productivity and morale by changing the work environment, possibly by re-instituting TQM (Total Quality Management) which was very successful under the previous years. Information on TQM is attached: Exhibit A.

Team members met with the Director and staff of Labor Relations and conducted interviews with City union leaders, union members and union attorneys.

## Findings

According to a Munis print-out, the City spent \$3.3 million in legal costs and settlements (object code 56130) in 2014 and \$5.8 million in 2015. In addition, interviews with union leaders indicated that a substantial number of cases under the previous administration were handled by outside counsel, which according to the Finance Director has cost the city well over \$500,000 per year for the past two years.

The amount spent on outside attorneys is concerning because the City employs 6 people in Labor Relations @ \$519,518 and 21 people in the City Attorney's Office @ \$1.8 million.

Labor Relations indicated that its budget for special services, which is used for outside counsel, has been \$300,000 per year historically. The Department spent \$269,904 in FY2014, \$91,000 in FY2015 and \$56,000 so far in FY2016. Staff suggested that the remainder of the legal services expenses might be attributable to the City Attorney's Office and/or Board of Education.

Labor Relations handles BOE cases for non-certified staff; however, all other cases involving certified staff (teachers, administrators) are handled by outside counsel.

Sometimes the cost of outside counsel is justified as was the case with police arbitration which resulted in significant future cost savings (eliminated the practice of unlimited sick time and retiree health benefits).

There has been some success mediating cases with the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) whose members file the greatest number of grievances. If unions are willing, Labor Relations would like to have more mediation sessions to settle grievances.



Labor Relations suggested more management/supervisor training to teach managers to effectively deal with employees and thereby possibly decreasing the number of grievances.

#### Recommendations

- 1. Assess the current use and cost of outside counsel to determine if more legal services can be provided in-house thereby decreasing costs.**
- 2. Consider putting legal services out to bid to reduce costs.**
- 3. Encourage mediation as a way to settle more union grievances without costly arbitrations and the use of outside attorneys.**
- 4. Work with the Director of Labor Relations to create and maintain a fair and productive work environment for employees.**
- 5. Provide ongoing training. Survey the employees to see what areas of training are needed. Utilize the City's Employee Assistance Program to conduct training whenever possible.**
- 6. General recommendation: Re-institute TQM as a way to involve employees at all levels in identifying and solving problems, improving/enhancing City services and decreasing costs.**

## **Tax Collectors Office**

### Overview

The mission of the Tax Collector's Office is to collect all tax revenue due to the City in accordance with Connecticut State Statutes and to provide the taxpayers of Bridgeport with information and assistance in a prompt and courteous manner.

In previous years, Transition Team members have observed long lines at the Tax Collectors Office and have heard numerous complaints regarding the wait time. To measure taxpayer satisfaction, the Team developed a customer survey which was administered to people waiting in line at the Tax Collectors Office during the last full week of January 2016 which is a peak tax collection month.

In addition to the survey, Team members observed tax collection activity and interviewed the Tax Collector regarding improvements that she is implementing to decrease the wait time.

### Findings

The survey revealed that:

1. Taxpayers waited in line between 5 and 30 minutes and all were either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
2. Taxpayers were aware of the online payment system but did not want to pay the 2.5% fee charged by the outside vendor.
3. Some people in line were not aware of extended hours offered during peak tax months. The office is open during the last week of January and July, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on the last Saturday of the two months from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The extended hours are printed on the tax bill.
4. Parking is inconvenient. The visitors parking lot is located at the north side of the building near Congress Street; however, the entrance on that side is locked to the public. The public must enter through the main entrance on the east side of the building on Lyon Terrace. There is street parking on Lyon Terrace; however, it was all taken. The parking lot directly across from the main entrance is for employees only.
5. All Staff have been trained to take payments during peak tax season.
6. Five windows were open on the day of the Team visit and 7 windows can be open depending on the number of people waiting in line at any given time.
7. The 2015 – 2016 General Fund Budget mentions the use of a suggestion box in the Tax Collectors Office; however, one has not yet been installed.
8. There is a payment Drop Box located inside the office.

## Recommendations

- 1. Look into reducing the 2.5% surcharge for online payments.**
- 2. Make the extended hours schedule more visible on the tax bill, possibly printing on the backside of the envelope. Also post hours outside of the office so they can be seen any time of day.**
- 3. Consider improving public access to the building by unlocking the side door on the north side of City Hall or switching the public and employee parking lots.**
- 4. Install a suggestion box outside of the office so that suggestions may be received during and after office hours.**
- 5. Consider installing a secure Drop Box outside the office so that payments can be dropped off after hours.**

## Exhibit A - Outline of Total Quality Management (TQM)

Source: [www.isixsigma.com](http://www.isixsigma.com)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management approach to enhance quality, productivity and efficiency by involving all levels of the workforce in identifying and resolving issues. Total quality is a description of the culture, attitude and organization of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. The culture requires quality in all aspects of the company's operations, with processes being done right the first time and defects and waste eradicated from operations.

To be successful implementing TQM, an organization must concentrate on the eight key elements:

### **Ethics, Integrity, Trust, Training, Teamwork, Leadership, Recognition, & Communication**

#### Foundation:

TQM is built on a foundation of ethics, integrity and trust. It fosters openness, fairness and sincerity and allows involvement by everyone. This is the key to unlocking the ultimate potential of TQM.

1. **Ethics** – Ethics is the discipline concerned with good and bad in any situation. It is a two-faceted subject represented by organizational and individual ethics. Organizational ethics establish a business code of ethics that outlines guidelines that all employees are to adhere to in the performance of their work. Individual ethics include personal rights or wrongs.
2. **Integrity** – Integrity implies honesty, morals, values, fairness, and adherence to the facts and sincerity. The characteristic is what customers (internal or external) expect and deserve to receive. (Internal customers = other employees/departments; external customers = residents)
3. **Trust** – Trust is a by-product of integrity and ethical conduct. Without trust, the framework of TQM cannot be built. Trust fosters full participation of all members. It allows empowerment that encourages pride ownership and it encourages commitment. It allows decision making at appropriate levels in the organization, fosters individual risk-taking for continuous improvement and helps to ensure that measurements focus on improvement of process and are not used to contend people.
4. **Training** – Training is very important for employees to be highly productive. Training may include: interpersonal skills, the ability to function within teams, problem solving and decision making. Employees are trained so that they can become effective employees for the company.
5. **Teamwork** – To become successful in business, teamwork is also a key element of TQM. With the use of teams, the business will receive quicker and better solutions to problems. Teams also provide more permanent improvements in processes and operations. In teams, people feel

more comfortable bringing up problems that may occur, and can get help from other workers to find a solution and put into place.

6. Leadership – It is possibly the most important element in TQM. It appears everywhere in the organization. A key point is that TQM has to be introduced and led by top management. Commitment and personal involvement is required from top management in creating and deploying clear quality values and goals consistent with the objectives of the company and in creating and deploying well defined systems, methods and performance measures for achieving those goals.

7. Communication – It binds everything together. The success of TQM demands communication with and among all the organization members, suppliers and customers. This includes:

- a. Downward communication – This is the dominant form of communication in an organization where supervisors keep employees informed through staff meetings, presentations and discussions.
- b. Upward communication – By this the lower level of employees are able to provide suggestions to upper management. As employees provide insight and constructive criticism, supervisors must listen effectively to correct the situation that comes about through the use of TQM. This forms a level of trust between supervisors and employees.
- c. Sideways communication – This type of communication is important because it breaks down barriers between departments. It also allows dealing with customers and suppliers in a more professional manner.

8. Recognition – Recognition is the last and final element in the entire system. It should be provided for both suggestions and achievements for teams as well as individuals. Employees strive to receive recognition for themselves and their teams. Detecting and recognizing contributors is the most important job of a supervisor. As people are recognized, there can be huge changes in self-esteem, productivity, quality and the amount of effort exerted to the task at hand.

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## Economic Development and Small Business

### Members:

**Rina Bakalar** - Committee Co - Chair, consultant United Way  
**Mickey Herbert** - Committee Co-Chair, Herbert Consulting  
**Tyisha Toms, Esq.** -Committee Co-Chair, Attorney  
**Stephanie Barnes**, President-Elect Greater Fairfield Board of Realtors  
**Jim Carbone**, CEO, The Plastics Factory  
**Richard Carraro**, President, West End Business Association  
**Peter Carroll**, President, Fairfield County Business Trades Council  
**John Cotter**, CEO, Nutmeg Adjusters  
**Douglas Davidoff**, Consultant, Straight Talk Public Relations  
**Randy Fescue**, President, PEP-Lacey Manufacturing  
**Barbara Yvette Gonzalez**, President, Beyond Homecare Staffing  
**Brandon Hall**, Managing Partner, Forstone Capital  
**Rosalina Christy**, Community Activist  
**Raul Laffitte**, Director of Transportation, Board of Education  
**Charles Stallworth**, Ex-Officio



### Mission and Overview

Examine current economic development projects and issues facing the small business sector and job creation; Recommend policies to improve the business climate, enhance on-going development activities, and to encourage new and additional job growth and development.

Bridgeport is the largest city in Connecticut by population with more than 144,000 people living within approximately 16 square miles. The community has rich diversity and history to build on. Decades in the making, Bridgeport is beginning to reinvent itself and attract development. The city is at a critical crossroads and it is essential to maintain and further build upon the economic vibrancy that is reemerging. In order to accomplish a stable and vibrant economy, Bridgeport needs a clear and well understood vision for its reinvention that speaks to the desires and aspirations of its residents, businesses and elected officials.

At the same time, in a city with almost 40% of its land being tax exempt and given the overreliance on property tax to fund critical services and infrastructure, it is essential to implement effective methods to generate new revenues. As of November 2015, 7.4% of Bridgeport residents are unemployed, creating additional pressure for services and underscoring the reality that those least able to pay for services, are often paying the highest price given the local tax burden. It is essential to not only raise new revenue but to greatly enhance net job growth (available jobs) in Bridgeport.

The Office of Planning and Economic Development is key to crafting, communicating and carrying out Bridgeport's reinvention vision, and to generating revenues and fostering job

growth. In order to do so with greater results, the department must refocus and redefine its role in the municipal structure.

The recommendations highlighted below have been developed with the input of the public, economic development experts and committee members who have all contributed with passion and enthusiasm and a belief that Bridgeport's best days are ahead.

### **Areas of Focus**

The Economic Development and Small Business Task Force Committee focused on the following areas:

1. Galvanizing a Vision
2. Commitment to Current and Future Economic Development Activities
3. Department Efficiencies & Strategic Use of Resources
4. Growing Revenues
5. Rebranding Bridgeport
6. Small Business Support
7. Economic Development Strategies

The intention of committee members is to offer practical suggestions for consideration that will have near term benefit on the effectiveness of Bridgeport's economic development work and the vibrancy of Bridgeport's economy.



## Galvanizing a Vision

While a fair amount of economic development activity is underway throughout the city, residents continue to express frustration with high taxes and the lack of job opportunities. There seems to be a pervasive feeling on the part of residents the development activity underway has no direct benefit to their lives or in their neighborhoods. It is critical to open dialog with city residents around development plans and activities, and to insure that dialog highlights the clear return to the local community--especially when tax relief and other public incentives are involved. At the same time, developers and businesses want to understand the priorities and goals of the city in order to ascertain if a project fits within the city's vision and is likely to gain support.

### Recommendations

- 1. Initiate a comprehensive review and update of the City's Master Plan. The review should include significant public input. The review should consider among other items: (a) promoting mixed-use and transit-oriented developments, (b) expediting timelines to secure required approvals, (c) addressing specific business needs of neighborhoods (d) use of the waterfront, and (e) revising planning and zoning regulations.**
- 2. Once complete, implement the Master Plan and tie incentives and prioritize development efforts in accordance with the plan.**
- 3. Require Economic Development staff and partners to go into neighborhoods to provide residents and businesses briefings of economic development activity affecting their neighborhood and the city at least annually. The discussion should clearly highlight the community benefit (jobs, tax base growth, environmental improvements, etc.) and connection to the city's Master Plan.**
- 4. Develop periodic reporting mechanism for OPED leadership that ties to the goals of the Master Plan with clear measures that can document progress and success.**

## **Commitment to Current and Future Economic Development Activities**

The new Administration has well started the effort to insure vital projects continue and are supported. A meeting of developers with active projects underway in Bridgeport was held at the Bridgeport Regional Business Council on November 20, 2015. The meeting was designed to brief the Mayor and his team and was the first time many of these developers had been in the same room. Follow up meetings on key projects have been held to highlight immediate needs and actions required to maintain progress.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Commit to a culture of engaging developers to facilitate project progress. Schedule office hours and visit projects.**
- 2. Demonstrate commitment to transparency in every aspect of operations.**
- 3. Build a close working relationship with state and federal administrative officials and elected officials, investors, banks/private financiers and potential funders to promote economic development activities.**
- 4. Reach out to the region's adjacent community leaders to let them know the City of Bridgeport is open for business.**
- 5. Consider bringing developers together twice annually to cross inform development efforts.**

## Department Efficiencies & Strategic Use of Resources

There is a strong sense the Office of Planning and Economic Development staff and leadership is not only under resourced, but is often bogged down with details less directly related to the core mission of building tax base growth/revenues and the facilitation of job growth. There is a need to invest in the department, leverage outside resources more effectively to support economic development and to remove some of the tangentially related duties/responsibilities from the department in order to increase capacity and efficiency.

### Recommendations

- 1. Retain/Hire a highly qualified Economic Development Director. The Director should have strong economic development and planning background in addition to extensive management/government administration experience. In order to engender confidence and build interest/sell the city, the Director should have a strong public presence.**
- 2. Immediately seek to fill the Deputy Economic Development Director for Regulation and Enforcement with a highly experienced land use/building professional possessing strong management skills and technology platform.**
- 3. Fill key vacancies in the Building Department.**
- 4. Move the Anti-Blight Department to Public Facilities for direct oversight.**
- 5. Complete Phase 2 of the efficiency study for the Building Department. Funding is in place to complete this assessment. Once complete act to implement recommendations to streamline approval processes.**
- 6. Fully automate the permitting process. Complete the digitization of records.**
- 7. Assign the Fire Marshall office under the Office of Planning and Development.**
- 8. Consider structuring customer service in the Building Department in two tracks to improve efficiency—one track for homeowners and one track for Engineers, Architects and Developers.**
- 9. Restructure and strengthen the Central Grants Office sufficiently to fully absorb the responsibility for grant writing, reporting and grant administration of economic development awards in order to free up economic development associates so they can focus on project management.**
- 10. Leverage the capacity of the multiple non-city economic development resources in a much more strategic way. Bring these entities in early on development projects in order to line up support, capacity and financing mechanisms.**
- 11. Better utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Brownfield Loan Fund and other resources to support economic development priorities. Structure the Loan Fund and potentially other resources to be sustainable resources that return unrestricted capital to the city for future use.**

- 12. Evaluate the City's role and oversight of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zones to bring greater impact and efficiency to neighborhood efforts. Determine a course of action that serves to relieve some of the tedious oversight, planning and contracting responsibilities from economic development staff.**
- 13. Use the resources and intellectual capital of the local universities at a much higher level to support economic development (Internships, Fellowships, etc.). Encourage Universities to expand campuses into the urban center.**

## **Growing Revenues**

Key to growing revenue is increasing Bridgeport's tax base. With a good portion of Bridgeport's land under exemption, maximizing future revenue is essential.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Develop a standardized abatement policy with clear limits that provides transparency while maintaining a level of flexibility. Require community benefit for abatements and only offer abatements if the project is a high priority in the Master Plan.**
- 2. Conduct focused outreach to commercial broker community to showcase Bridgeport and develop interest.**
- 3. Undertake an aggressive business recruitment effort focused on targeted industries. There is currently no active business recruitment effort in Bridgeport.**
- 4. Greatly expand business retention efforts. Currently the Bridgeport Regional Business Council handles business retention. This work needs to be preemptive and focused.**
- 5. Expand efforts for adaptive reuse of dormant properties. The city should explore at the neighborhood level a strategy to take possession of properties greatly detracting from redevelopment and neighborhood stability.**
- 6. Aggressively pursue development options for top underperforming properties.**
- 7. Consider vacating 752 East Main Street and returning it to the tax rolls. The site has potential for transit oriented development given the envisioned second train station.**
- 8. Tax Committee may want to further examine working with the state delegation to extend the tax pilot program (Conn. Gen. Stat. 12-63h) to evaluate the effectiveness of a land value tax strategy as opposed to a property value tax strategy.**

## **Rebranding Bridgeport**

As the vision for Bridgeport is developed, it will need to be effectively communicated internally and externally to build understanding and interest in the city. Whether targeting visitors, developers, new residents or businesses, they will all need to understand what Bridgeport has to offer.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Develop a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Bridgeport.**
- 2. Develop and maintain a Bridgeport mobile app to promote activities, resources and opportunities.**
- 3. Brand neighborhoods, potentially via a naming convention, and give neighborhoods a purpose or identity that can attract interest. This strategy was successful with Bijou Square in Bridgeport.**
- 4. Work with areas towns and cities to propose legislation to provide resources for neighbor branding and reinvention efforts.**
- 5. Focus anti-blight efforts on the long neglected Metro North corridor.**
- 6. Develop a strategy to harness and promote the Creative Economy in Bridgeport. Engage the city's creative talent in the re-envisioning of the city.**

## **Small Business Support**

Small businesses provide the majority of jobs in Bridgeport. It is essential to support existing businesses and the development of new businesses. There are a variety of organizations seeking to support businesses in Bridgeport. Businesses have expressed difficulty in navigating the various resources. A number of business owners expressed the need for more specific and detailed assistance than what is available. Specifically, help preparing applications for public loan and grant capital would be of great benefit for businesses without the infrastructure and financial resources to prepare applications.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Create a central small business resource center that serves as liaison to all other agencies designed to assist small businesses. Streamline the assistance process.**
- 2. Identify which small business resource can provide more intense support and navigation for small businesses seeking to submit applications for small business capital through state programs.**
- 3. Implement greater oversight and accountability to insure compliance with minority business ordinances.**
- 4. Study the concept of lower rent districts for targeted industries (technology, retail, energy businesses, etc./Pearl Street Development Model)**
- 5. Foster small business networking and customer development.**
- 6. Model the Portland, Oregon weekend market/street fair concept.**
- 7. Create an environment that supports entrepreneurs. Explore additional incubator/We Works space (ex. Firehouse on Clarence Street).**
- 8. Expand Wi-Fi access in all of downtown and small business corridors.**
- 9. Remove or upgrade parking meters. Rationalize parking for residents and visitors.**
- 10. Study feasibility of business improvement districts in every neighborhood. Consider a neighborhood pilot.**

## **Economic Development Strategies**

There seems to be a great deal of interest in looking at other cities around the state and country for strategies and ideas that can be applied in Bridgeport in order to transform the city and make it more modern, appealing, dynamic and innovative. In addition, people expressed a need to prioritize and focus efforts for smart development.

### Recommendations

- 1. Support and promote Bridgeport's cultural activities and institutions as a vehicle of innovation, social change and urban interest (Bridgeport Art Trail, Barnum Museum re-envisioning etc.)**
- 2. Address the ascetics and signage in downtown.**
- 3. Implement Citi-bikes, zip cars, Wi-Fi Kiosks and other modern conveniences.**
- 4. Explore micro-housing development and downtown homeownership options.**
- 5. Focus on key corridors- State Street, Stratford Avenue, Connecticut Avenue and Downtown North.**
- 6. Heavily focus on transit-oriented development. Tap new transportation funding to support these projects.**
- 7. Target specific industries for support and business development- technology, manufacturing, retail, energy, architectural/marketing/engineering, digital media.**



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## Community and Neighborhood Services

### Members:

**Dr. Ralph Ford**, Co-Chair, East End Community Leader  
**Jose Ortiz**, Co-Chair, Executive Director, Hispanic Health Council  
**John Paul Esteves**, President, Disability Resource Network  
**Milta Feliciano**, City Councilmember 137<sup>th</sup> District  
**Reverend Janene Hawkins Esq.**, Attorney  
**Representative Jack Hennessy**, Chairman Bridgeport State Legislative Delegation  
**Reverend Mary McBride-Lee**, Councilmember 135<sup>th</sup> District  
**Elizabeth Torres**, Director Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust  
**Gil Hernandes, Jr.**, Community Activist  
**Ernie Newton**, Former State Senator  
**Shaquana Shaw**, P.T. Barnum Tenant Leader  
**Maria Valle**, Program Manager, GBAPP  
**Pastor David Miller**, New Hope Church  
**Sam Gant**, Community Activist  
**Charles Stallworth**, Ex-Officio



### Mission and Overview

This Community and Neighborhood Services Task Force Committee has been assigned to him review and summarize issues affecting and impacting neighborhoods, residents and underserved communities. The recommendations are focused on improving City Hall operations that affect the quality of life of city residents.

The daunting task of identifying neighborhood and community issues as well as collecting and reviewing data required significant brainstorming, energy and effort by all committee members. There were 23 areas of interest that were originally discussed by the committee. There was consensus to pursue five areas of interest. Both City Hall personnel and other community stakeholders were interviewed. Most recommendations were the result of the committee's interviews and investigations.

The recommendations include structural, administrative and policy changes.

### Areas of Focus

The Neighborhood and Community Services Transition Team has focused on the following areas:

1. Blight
2. Housing
3. Healthcare
4. Communications
5. Ex-Felon Initiatives

# Blight

## Findings

Blight is an issue that affects all neighborhoods within the City of Bridgeport. It can be defined by a variety of situations, including such things as: overgrown grass, excess items in the yard, hazardous materials on the property, or hazardous/unsafe condition of the property. Most citizens are unaware of the Blight removal process. Complaints are generally made via the mayor's office, health department personnel or citizens utilizing the Q alert system. However, many citizens are unaware of the statutory regulations regarding blight removal. Also, complainants are frustrated by the multistep process and time to remove blighted property from residential neighborhoods.

The Blight department is administratively located in the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED). The Blight personnel are physically located in the area along with public health personnel. The city charter indicates that the Blight office is administered by the public health department. The blight removal process involves interfacing with environmental health, housing-code enforcement, city attorney and public works. At times there is much difficulty coordinating the efforts of multiple departments in order to resolve blighted situations. Lastly, there is a limited number of Blight personnel qualified to address the citywide problem.

## Recommendations

- 1. Restructure Anti-Blight Department and merge with environmental health.**
- 2. Increase number of blight inspectors**
- 3. Expand blight inspector's capabilities to perform additional types of inspections**
- 4. Include information regarding blight in residential and commercial tax bills**
- 5. Modify City Ordinance regarding authority of inspectors**
- 6. Create personnel class consisting of separate sanitarian Levels (i.e. I, II, Registered)**
- 7. Review and promote regulatory change to reduce delays in blight removal.**

## Ex-Offender Initiative

### Mission

To review the process of Re-Entry regarding ex-felons in the City of Bridgeport. Assess the system of services needed to reduce recidivism and to promote an advocacy for improving the quality of life for citizens re-entering society from incarceration.

### Findings

Approximately 300 to 400 ex-offenders return to Bridgeport on an annually basis. There are multiple barriers facing this population including lack of: employment, housing, education, clothing, etc. Failure to overcome these barriers often leads to increase recidivism.

This sub-committee reviewed public and private resources as well as programs provided by cities in the State of Connecticut and nationwide, including programs in: New Haven, Connecticut; Newark, New Jersey; Washington, DC, and Indianapolis, Indiana. There is a lack of coordination among agencies and resources in the Bridgeport area to effectively address many of these issues especially in regards to housing and employment.

### Recommendations

- 1. Establish a department of re-entry to help coordinate benefits and services for ex-offenders.**
- 2. Set aside 10% of the professional and non-professional City Hall employment opportunities specifically for ex-offenders.**
- 3. Develop project labor agreements with unions and developers to hire ex-felons on projects utilizing city funds.**
- 4. Provide tax incentives to city businesses that recruit and hire ex-felons.**
- 5. Coordinate with Park City Communities to establish new guidelines for housing ex-felons in public housing.**
- 6. Create a collaborative city/private sector stipend- program to assist ex-felons to gain permanent employment.**
- 7. Encourage companies doing business with the City of Bridgeport to ban the box on the application.**
- 8. Encourage state delegation to in act legislation regarding expunging felony records after specific time period. (non-violent offenders)**
- 9. Collaborate with non-profits to create more affordable housing for ex-offenders.**

## Communications

### Findings

The City of Bridgeport has utilized multiple methods of communicating information to the general public via print, electronic and telecommunication media. The information includes emergency warnings, programs, current events, celebrations and general information. The City of Bridgeport's public Information officer(s) is usually responsible for the content and dissemination. However, the City of Bridgeport's website is currently two years outdated. Also, specific information regarding city services and programs are not available in print or electronic media. Currently, there are no assigned personnel for updating the electronic media. In comparison to other towns and cities, Bridgeport has not kept pace with the ever-changing methods of modern technology for communicating with the public.

### Recommendations

- 1. Assign/ create a web master position with the specific responsibility for maintaining up to date information on the City of Bridgeport's Website.**
- 2. Add additional portals to allow the public to assess forms, documents and programs.**
- 3. Provide for linkages to community resources to provide information to the website.**
- 4. Provide Information regarding the meeting dates and agendas of City boards and commissions.**
- 5. Update electronic media utilizing new technologies.**
- 6. Establish partnerships with area colleges and universities to assist with maintaining/designing appropriate web and other telecommunication media.**

# APPENDIX A

Programs	New Haven Fresh Start	Newark, NJ Office of Re-Entry	Hamilton County, Ohio Office of Re-Entry	Philadelphia Pennsylvania Rise	Cuyahoga County, Ohio Office of Re-Entry	Memphis and Shelby County Office of Reentry	Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Ex-Offender Reentry	Washington DC Office of Returning Citizen Affairs
Information Hub/ Resource Guide								
Job Search Services/Skill Training								
How to apply for a pardon								
Restoring Voting Rights								
Mentoring								
Referral Agency								
Case Management								
Educational/Vocational Training								
Prevention								
Shelter/ Housing								
Basic needs- food/clothing/ etc.								
Community Awareness/ Training								
Policy Development/ Advocacy								
Data and Evaluation								
Sustainability								
Client Service Tracker								
Health Care, mental health, substance								
Record sealing and expunging								
Out of Office of the Mayor								
Transitional Employment								
Family and community Support								
Parenting Assistance								

# Housing

## Findings

Bridgeport's annual median household income in 2013 was \$41,050, 41% less than Connecticut's median household income of \$69,461. It is 50% less than Fairfield County's median household income of \$82,283. Bridgeport's median household income ranks 165 (1=highest, 169=lowest) among CT's 169 municipalities.

In 2015, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Greater Bridgeport was \$1,283 a month. 5.56% of Bridgeport families with children under the age of 18 are renters. The 2015 fair market rent in Bridgeport (\$1,283) was 81% of what a parent working 40 hours a week at minimum wage (\$9.15/hour) earn before taxes (\$1,586 a month). The recommended percent of an individual's earning wage that should be spent on monthly rent is no more than 30%. There are 2,700 public housing units in Bridgeport, of which 1,923 (71%) are two bedrooms or more. As of January 2016, there were 1,736 families on the waiting list for public housing in Bridgeport.

From October 1, 2014-September 30, 2015, 167 children spent time in a Bridgeport area homeless shelter. Of these children, 70 (41.9%) were under the age of six. In 2013-14, 285 children spent time in a Bridgeport area shelter, marking a decrease of 41.4% fewer children facing homelessness in 2014-15. Statewide, 916 families reportedly spent time in a homeless shelter from 2014-15, compared to 76 Bridgeport families. In 2014-15, there were 4.5 homeless children in Bridgeport shelters per 1,000 children compared to the statewide rate of 2.0 homeless children per 1,000 children.

## Mission and Overview

The community and Neighborhood Services Committee (CNSC) was charged with examining community and neighborhood services. A key challenge identified is the need for affordable housing and other housing programs within the City of Bridgeport. A subcommittee was formed to address these concerns and make recommendations for improvement.

General Administration

## Recommendations

- 1. Develop a housing policy and plan with specific goals and priorities.**
- 2. Ensure compliance with city's consolidated plan and master plan.**
- 3. Fill vacant positions.**
- 4. Reorganize administrative support staff to manage reporting and other administrative duties to allow directors and managers to perform substantive work.**

5. **Further integrate housing programs and production into the Department of Planning and Economic Development to ensure that the development of affordable housing is a priority.**
6. **Evaluate the effectiveness of public marketing campaigns.**
7. **Increase capacity by outsourcing to others (consultants, attorneys, nonprofits, other partners)**
8. **Continue outsource project Finance Analyst who can conduct an in-depth analysis of pro-forma and developer financials.**
9. **Tax Policy. Develop a tax policy to encourage investment and create affordable housing.**

#### Long-Term Action

1. Zoning. Evaluate areas where higher densities would be appropriate. This would include areas located close to transportation corridors and employment areas that could support residential development, consider mixed-use zoning that would support both residential and non-residential development, Consider PUD ordinance that allow flexibility in densities and lot requirements (lot size, setbacks, etc.) to not only encourage development of lower-prices housing, but also make it feasible for the private market to provide lower-priced units.
2. Inclusionary Zoning. Consider regulation that require contribution to (or development of) affordable housing as a component of the development, such as inclusionary zoning.

### **Housing Production**

#### Immediate Action

1. **Rentals.** Increase number of housing units being that are affordable to low-income individuals and /or families earning 30 and 50% AMI. This also includes rentals that would be aged- restricted for seniors and that are disability restricted/accessible.
2. **Mixed –income, mixes-use developments.** Incentive developers to include housing opportunities for seniors, developmentally and physically disable, large families, single parents, homeless or near homeless and ex-offenders. Various program strategies can be implemented, including property tax abatement for lower income home owner, developing more group homes or shared living for disable, increasing emergency shelter option and offering transitional housing. Some programs combine housing assistance with job training, education and day care for single-parent households, all of these programs will address housing and social needs for Bridgeport residents who encounter multiple obstacles when trying to improve their living situation.



## **Housing Programs**

### **Immediate Action**

1. **Permanently Affordable Homeownership Units:** Prioritize the development of affordable homeownership.

### **Long-Term Action**

2. **Rehabilitation Loan Programs.** Expand rehabilitation loan program to make needed health and safety improvements to owner-occupied housing for seniors and lower income households. Support rehabilitation loan programs that can be available to first-time homebuyers to upgrade the older, but otherwise affordable, housing stock in Bridgeport. Explore options to encourage landlords to upgrade and maintain properties to increase the quality of older rental properties. About 71 percent of ownership housing and 61 percent of rental housing were built prior to 1950, many of which could benefit from energy efficiency upgrade and other rehabilitation efforts.
3. **Sweat Equity and Fixer-Upper Programs.** Explore program options that would encourage acquisition of older homes and renovation through sweat equity. Explore programs that would result in new home development through sweat equity programs.
4. **Down Payment and Rental Assistance Programs.** Expand rent assistance programs can help renters stay in their current housing and avoid homelessness as well as down payment assistance to help renters takes the first step towards homeownership.
5. **Reverse Annuity Mortgages.** Work with local lenders to expand and implement Annuity Mortgage Programs for seniors that own their homes. These programs allow older adults access to the equity in their homes for living expense and can enhance their ability to remain in their homes and make needed repairs.
6. **New Programs.** Reestablish fair housing commission and fair rent commission.

### **Resources**

1. **Develop plan to use \$1,000,000 from State for NRZ and consider investing in housing production programs.**
2. **Develop a process for getting dollars out the door efficiently.**

### **Long-Term Action**

3. **Obtain other grant funds to support housing production and programs.**
4. **Leverage limited resources by investing in high priority and high impact projects.**
5. **Explore ways to maximize capital investment in housing production impact projects.**
6. **Evaluate how CDBG dollars are invested.**

7. Develop a rating and ranking systems by which all funding applications are awarded prioritizing those applications that align with the City's priority.

## **Partnership**

### Recommendations

1. **Evaluate role of housing authority within the context of the City's overall housing needs and actively engage them as a partner.**
2. **Encourage public/private partnership as a mean to achieve identifies housing goals.**
3. **Engage major employers (Bridgeport Hospital, St. Vincent's, University of Bridgeport, etc.) to invest in live where you work initiatives.**

Exhibit A: Bridgeport Housing Data Profiles - Partnership Strong Communities.

## Health Services

The Community and Neighborhood Services Committee (CNSC) was charged with examining and reviewing the operations of Bridgeport's Department of Health and Social Services (BDHSS). BDHSS' mission is to promote and protect the health of the residents of Bridgeport through the provision of essential health services, monitoring of programs, enforcement of laws and ordinance, and collection health information.

### Areas of Focus

BDHSS provides greater number of services than other large health departments in the state with less staff and funding. (See attachment A)

The ability of BDHSS to bring in outside funds to support programming is hampered by a system that does not use modern public health strategies to address concerns. The accreditation process will greatly aid in bringing those processes into place and making the department more competitive for outside funds.

BDHSS is an active partner in efforts to prioritize health concerns of Bridgeport residents as part of a regional Community Health Needs Assessment effort. This effort was last completed in 2013 and being conducted again right now. Prioritized health concerns in 2013 include:

1. Cardiac disease and diabetes (asthma to be added in 2016)
2. Access to care
3. Mental Health and Substance Abuse services
4. Obesity
5. Violence
6. Smoking

### Findings

Health Equity and social justice are the core of BDHSS' work. Therefore, while BDHSS serves all residents of the City, a deliberate, data-driven strategy is used to identify and prioritize sub-populations that experience inequitable access to services and/or health inequities. The map looks at Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases among adults over 45 as rates per 1000 residents in that age range. The resulting map demonstrates that regardless of age – disease rates are not equally distributed. The Bridgeport Department of Health and Social Services works to administer policies and address the social determinants that bring about these differences. The numbers of people BDHSS serves annually has grown from 3800 in 2010 to roughly 18,000 in 2015 – with a loss in staff in the same time period of 20%: 75 full time staff to now 60. We have been unable to fill open positions and struggled to bring in additional outside

resources without full time staff to support it. Despite similar levels of municipal support – Bridgeport’s health department has less funds to work with due to less state and federal funds – netting a lower \$/resident (Bridgeport: \$46, Hartford \$112, New Haven \$113).

### Recommendations

- 1. Complete application process for Public Health Accreditation.**
- 2. Fully engage in quality improvement efforts – ensuring that every department has clear and measurable goals that are evaluated in an ongoing way.**
- 3. Embed staff development and client feedback into every program unit to see that the department continues to evolve to meet community needs.**
- 4. Update Strategic Plan.**
- 5. Expand partnership level work (Primary Care Action Group, Get Healthy CT, Bridgeport Prospers).**
- 6. Restructure units to meet evolving community needs decrease administrative overhead. (See attachment B)**
- 7. Splitting overall department. into two sub units: regulatory and community services – each with its own deputy director and merging of some units.**
- 8. Removal of midlevel supervisors through attrition and merging of units and positions to improve cross training and interchangeability of staff.**
- 9. In recognition of the new Mayor’s commitment to young people to expand both paid and unpaid internship opportunities through the addition of a youth employment specialist to both raise funds for additional jobs and to manage young temporary employees and interns through the process offering the supports to do meaningful work and gain valuable work experience. This could be done by expanding role of existing staff into this effort.**
- 10. Move all inspections to an electronic format that allows us to review progress and ask questions.**
- 11. All health inspectors should be tracking their work in an electronic format.**
- 12. Address health equity through low-cost no-cost strategies.**
- 13. Ordinance changes have demonstrated effectiveness in other communities to increase access to healthy foods and to decrease access to cigarettes move to make these changes.**
- 14. Restructure Fees (housing code & environmental) to encourage positive community changes and increase revenue.**
- 15. Increase incoming funds.**
- 16. Move to acceptance of credit cards for all fees and in-field payment processing.**
- 17. Expand communicable clinic and lead poisoning by billing insurance for services using contracted billing services. This would increase city revenues.**

## Bridgeport Maintains Core Public Health Services With Fewer Employees And Less Funding...

City (Total pop'n)	City funds	State Funds	Federal & Other Funds	Total HD Budget (Total FTE)	HD funds per resident
Bridgeport (146,425)	\$3,748,155	\$1,660,172	\$1,416,917	\$6,825,243 (48)	<b>\$46</b>
Hartford (124,893)	\$4,704,432	\$3,115,706	\$6,256,069	\$14,076,207 (98)	\$112
New Haven (130,741)	\$3,046,706	\$1,569,653	\$9,546,575	\$14,858,720 (77)	\$113

BDHSS: Strategic Plan – Source 2014-5 Local  
Health Report

5

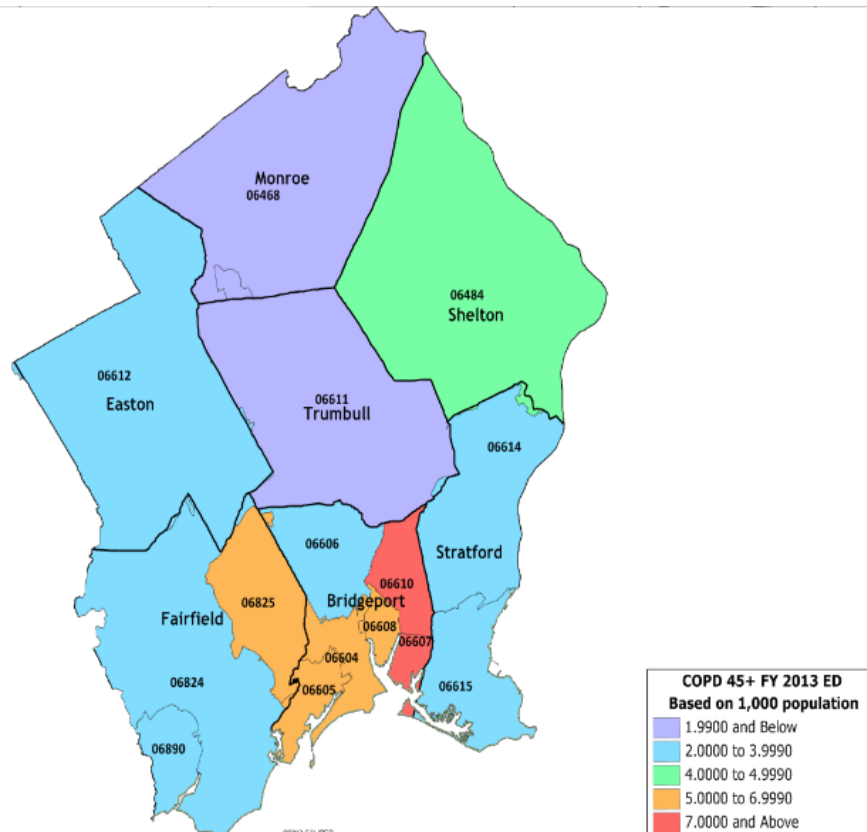
Comparison of three largest CT Health Departments from 2014-15 BDHSS Strategic Plan

# Core Public Health Services Provided

	Bridgeport	Hartford	New Haven
Insurance outreach	X		X
AIDS/HIV/Hepatitis C	X (N-ex only)	*cmtly partner	X
Cardiovascular, Diabetes, BP	w/Cmtly partner	X	
Lead	X	X	X
TB	X	X	X
Injury prevention	X(Tai chi for Srs)		
Smoking Cessation			
Obesity	w/Cmtly partner		
Violence Prevention	X (Lighthouse)		
Family Planning			X
Prenatal Care		X	
WIC	Cmtly partner	X	Cmtly partner
Immunization (Adult/Child/Travel)	(A/T)	(A/C)	(A/C)
SBHC/School Nurses	Cmtly partner/BOE	Cmtly partner/BOE	Cmtly partner/SN
Laboratory services	State lab	X	State lab
Food Access (farmer's market/ corner stores)	FM/CS	CS	CS

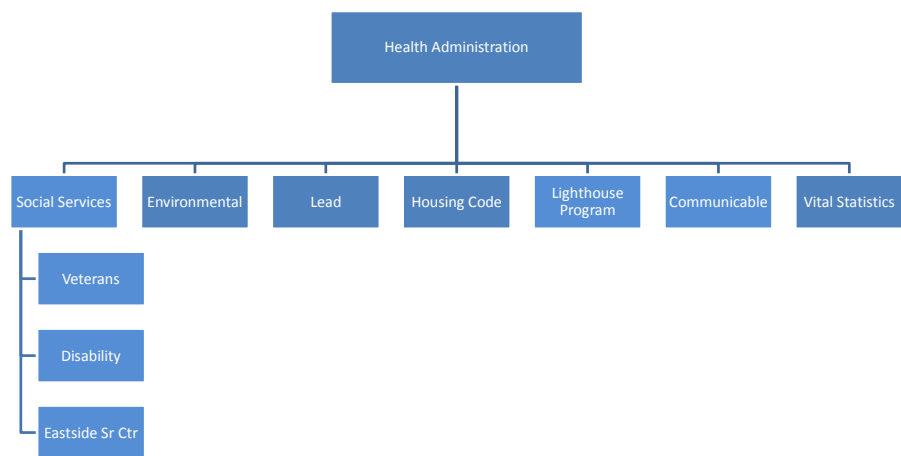
BDHSS: Strategic Plan – Source 2014-5 Local Health Report

6

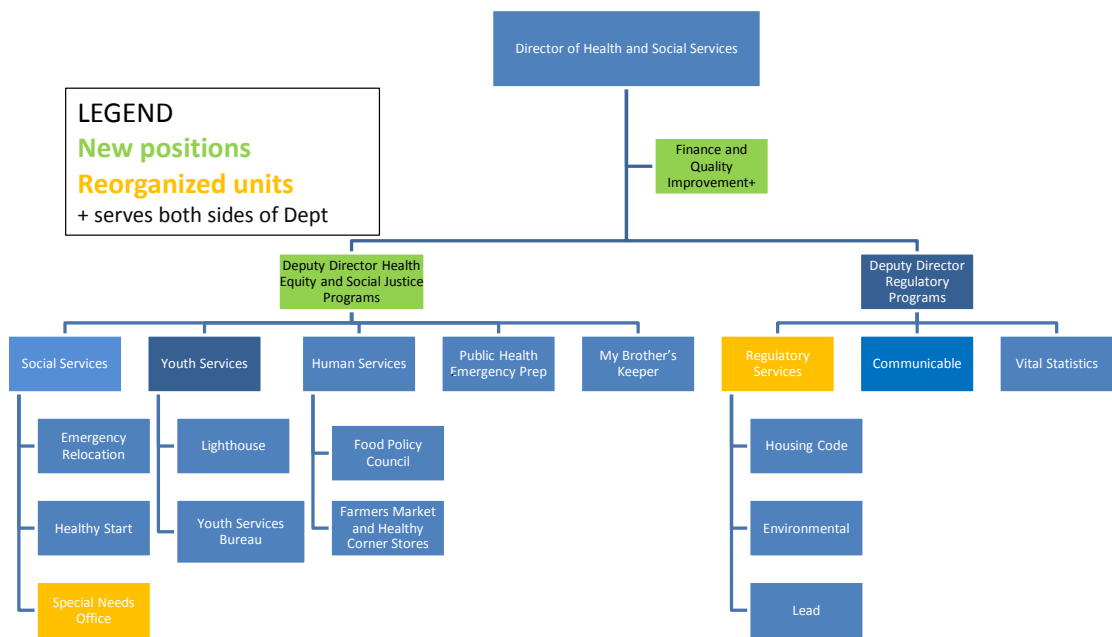


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Current Structure of BDHSS



BDHSS General Structural Change Recommendations



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## Public Safety & Emergency Services

### Members:

**Steve Nelson**, Committee Chair, Sheriff and Community activist  
**Wilbur Chapman**, Committee Co-Chair, Former Bridgeport Police Chief  
**Chuck Paris**, Committee Co-Chair, President City Police Local 1159  
**Lisa Anderson**, Computer Analyst, Board of Education  
**Hector Diaz**, Former State Representative  
**David Dobbs**, Vice President, City Firefighters Local 834  
**Jeff Kohut**, Community Activist/former Mayoral candidate  
**Reverend Martha Melvin**, Pastor  
**James Nealy**, Retired State Police Official  
**Pablo Jimenez**, Owner, P.J.'s Construction  
**Representative Ezequiel Santiago**, State Representative  
**Sheila Vega**, City Firefighter Engineer  
**Wanda Geter**, Community Activist  
**Shawn Sequeira**, Shelton Police Chief  
**Oliver Macklin**, Juvenile Probation Officer  
**Reverend Sulton Stack, Jr.**, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church  
**Neil Salonen**, Ex-Officio



### Mission and Overview

The Task of Public Safety and Emergency Services Committee was to highlight several identified public safety and emergency services concerns facing the City of Bridgeport and provide recommendations that should be implemented to promote change and improve the overall safety within the community.

### Areas of Focus:

1. Diversity within Public Safety Departments
2. Policies and Accreditation
3. Emergency Response Capabilities

## Diversity within the Department

### Findings

Lack of diversity in the hiring and promotion processes for minorities within the City's Police and Fire Departments is a significant issue.

Demographics show out of the last three police recruitment classes, only 7 Blacks and 13 Hispanics were hired. However, there were 46 White officers hired and 5 of the 46 were women. There were no Black or Hispanic women hired in the last three classes.

Demographics from of the last three fire department recruitment classes show no women were hired. In addition, only six Black and nine Latino applicants were hired. In comparison, twenty five White firefighters were hired by the City.

Demographic review for the most recent promotions in 2014 and 2015 within the Police Department show that only five of the eighteen officers promoted were of minority background ethnicities.

### Recommendations

- 1. Implement hiring and promotion practices that will ensure the Public Safety/ Emergency Services personnel adequately reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the community.**

*Sources: Connecticut General Assembly, Bill No7103, An Act Concerning Excessive Force*

*City of Bridgeport Police Department Recruitment Class Demographics*

*Doing It Local <http://www.doingitloal.com/2016/01/45505>*

## Police Department Policies and Accreditation

Issue: The Bridgeport Police Department Community Services Division is not adhering to the Community Services policies and procedures.

### Recommendation

1. **Require the Bridgeport Police Department Community Services Commanding Officer and Division to follow the written guidelines as stated in the Police Departments Manual to bridge the gap between the police officers and the community.**

*Source: Bridgeport Police Department Policies and Procedures, Community Services Division, Sections 3.5.1.1 - 3.5.2.7*

Issue: An unaccredited Police Department

### Recommendation

1. **Obtain state accreditation for the City of Bridgeport's Police Department to institute and improve accountability, service delivery and professionalism.**
2. **Having an accredited police department will help to prevent fraud, for example in the case where over \$30,000 went missing from the City of Bridgeport's Police Department Property Room.**
3. **Pursuing accreditation would also prevent officers under disciplinary or medical review to be assigned to work in the property or records room.**

*Sources: Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., (CALEA)*  
*<http://www.calea.org/content/commission>*

*Connecticut Post <http://m.ctpost.com/news/article/Thousands-in-cash-missing-from-Bridgeport-police-6630945.php>*

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## Youth & Education

### Members:

**Scott Hughes**, Committee Co-Chair, City Librarian  
**Dr. John Petillo**, Committee Co-Chair, President, Sacred Heart University  
**Dan Shamas**, former administrator, Board of Education  
**Dennis Bradley**, Chair, Bridgeport Board of Education  
**Dr. Paul Broadie**, President, Housatonic Community College  
**Lissette Colon**, Human Resource Dept., Board of Education  
**Christina Miranda**, In School Suspension Officer  
**Donna Andrade**, Educator, Fairfield Prep  
**Bob Halstead**, Former City Councilman 133<sup>rd</sup>  
**Mary Cameron**, Community Activist  
**Terrance O'Connor**, Executive Director, Cardinal Sheehan Center  
**Mary Pat Healy**, Executive Director - BCAC  
**Tim Bartlett**, Executive Director, YMCA  
**Kingsley Osei**, My Brother's Keeper  
**Neil Salonen**, Ex-Officio



### Mission and Overview

The Youth and Education Task Force Committee reviewed and analyzed issues facing youth and the public education system. The Committee recommends ways how government can partner and assist to make improvements in education and youth programs.

The following is a summary of the issues discussed with fellow committee members and comments from the public. Based on the discussion, the top five issues were selected to be addressed as priorities in the recommendations.

Please note the last page consists of an appendix with a list of sources of information for further research.

### Area of Focus:

1. Out of School Suspensions (OSS)
2. Attract and Retain Quality Teachers
3. After and Out of School Support
4. Universal Prekindergarten
5. Transparency of Budget Allocation
6. In-School Nutrition Health Issues
7. School Funding

# Out of School Suspensions (OSS)

## Findings

Expulsion and suspension rates combined total in Bridgeport Public Schools:

High Schools - 29.59 % / Middle Schools - 21.83 % / Elementary Schools - 7.95 %

Out of reported total sanctions, 52% of those are Out of School Suspensions.

*(CT Department of Education, March 2015 Data)*

## Recommendations

### **1. Potential In-School Strategies**

- a. 10 Actions Steps to Prevent the Use of Out of School Suspensions – National School Board Association.**
- b. Review model of “Reducing Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions in the District of Columbia Public and Public Charter Schools”.**
- c. Explore adoption of Seattle School District #1, Resolution No. 2014/15 – 35.**
- d. Continue to develop currently used RULER program - used to reduce in/out of school suspension, implement in administration & teachers, entire school staff being trained, parent center taking on parent training. The RULER program is supported by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is an acronym that stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions.**
- e. Reviewing and reorganizing School Volunteer Association for appropriate out of school support and preventative measures.**

### **2. Out of School Opportunities & Resources**

- a. Out of School alternative sites that can offer educational programming (recreation, tutoring, mentoring).**
- b. The Bridgeport Public Library in conjunction with Connecticut Small Business Development Center has developed a concept for an Innovation Lab. The model seeks to integrate the hands-on, mentor-led learning environment of makerspaces, with a business innovation center that provides tools to foster entrepreneurship for emerging, innovation-based enterprises.**
- c. The project has two main facets: one that focuses on educating the younger generations to prepare them for the growing demand for skills in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math, while integrating the added**

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**cognitive development benefits of the Arts (STEAM); the other that looks to offer local college students and local technology-based entrepreneurs in the community, the opportunity to use tools, resources, mentoring and applied skills to develop successful enterprises and build connections to meaningful employment.**

- d. Through a partnership with Housatonic Community College's School of Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Center, as well as the University of Bridgeport's School of Engineering, and the School of Design, the project seeks to provide local college students with the opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial ideas while mentoring younger generations.**
- e. Local companies will be approached for the chance to mentor budding entrepreneurs, and a monthly series of 1 Million Cups style, experiential learning opportunities will be held to provide early-stage startups with a platform to present their companies to a diverse audience of their peers, mentors, educators, and advisors.**
- f. Business advisors from the Connecticut Small Business Development Center would be available business guidance to growth and early stage companies.**
- g. Parent Center can be utilized as more of an educational resource.**

## Attract and Retain Quality Teachers

### Findings

Bridgeport has serious issues attracting and retaining quality teachers, causing staff turnover and affecting our students.

### Recommendations

- 1. Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program:** This program is intended to encourage individuals to enter and continue in the teaching profession. Under this program, if you teach full-time for five complete and consecutive academic years in certain elementary and secondary schools and educational service agencies that serve low-income families, and meet other qualifications, you may be eligible for forgiveness of up to a combined total of \$17,500 on your Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans and your Subsidized and Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans. All public schools in the City of Bridgeport qualify under this program. This program is part of the Federal Student Aid program under the U.S. Department of Education.
- 2. Review and remedy pay disparity.**

Comparison Examples - Starting Salary:

Bridgeport - \$42,428

Hartford - \$46,837

Norwalk - \$50,219

- 3. Improve Professional Support Staffing – current insufficiency of social workers, psychologists, etc. These staff members can also become key players in a Parent Center, and communicating with local organizations providing out of school/after school resources.**



## After and Out of School Support

### Findings

Bridgeport needs more after school and family out of school support.

### Recommendations

1. **Eco-Pass - The Eco-Pass idea, about 25 years old, allows an organization to contract with the Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT). All members of the organization receive passes, even if they don't use them, and the large volume allows the passes to be sold by the GBT at a low cost. Four thousand high school students could be eligible for the program.**
2. **Programs: Suggested initially as curriculum in school, but due to funding concerns they could be supported by external organizations as after-school or out of school education - Home Economics, Gardening, Food/Nutrition, Arts, Life Skills, Financial Literacy, Job Skills, Manufacturing, and Recreation.**
3. **Review and improve upon existing Bridgeport School Volunteers Association to increase availability of mentors and provide them with professional development to work with at-risk students. As part of this, explore Work-Study Federal Program to involve local college students in becoming mentors. The Federal Work Study is an approved on-campus or community service job to earn funds to help finance a student's education.**

## Universal Pre-Kindergarten

### Findings

The goal of universal Pre-Kindergarten should be attained.

### Recommendations

1. **Create a campaign to inform parents of availability of seats.**
2. **Implement long-term plan for Universal Pre-K that will make the program available to all Pre-K age students within the district.**

## **Transparency of Budget Allocation**

### Recommendations

1. **Annual Audit of Funds should be performed by City.**

## **In-School Nutrition Health Issues**

### Recommendations

1. **Evaluate schools to ensure compliance with School Nutrition Association standards.**
2. **Expand access to fresh & local food by increasing participation in the National Farm to Schools Network and evaluate current percentages of local, fresh food vs. other sources.**

## **School Funding Needs**

### Findings

Bridgeport is seriously underfunded relative to other school districts in CT. The cities of Hartford and New Haven for example receive tens of millions more in state aid than does the City of Bridgeport even though the City of Bridgeport is the largest city and system in the state.

### Recommendations

1. **The City must work to redress the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula and state grant aid inequities which significantly underfund Bridgeport Public Schools.**
2. **The City Legislative delegation and Mayor should work together wherever possible.**
3. **The City should seek federal sources of funds.**
4. **The state reimbursement rate for special education costs should be increased.**